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New York

Chairman: Mr. González . . . . . (Chile)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 64, 65 and 67 to 85 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Ms. Al-Aloui (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure at the outset to express to you, Sir, the sincere congratulations of the delegation of Bahrain on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. We are confident that with your capabilities, experience and leadership our deliberations will attain the desired outcome. I should also like to seize this opportunity to express my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau and wish them every success in their task.

May I also express the appreciation of our delegation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his opening statement and his continuing efforts in support of disarmament.

Disarmament and the curbing of the arms race, particularly in nuclear weapons, have been matters of great importance and concern discussed at the United Nations ever since its inception, as they are among the main purposes of the Organization and have become an important means by which to establish world peace and security. The accumulation of arms, particularly nuclear arms, is a matter of concern to the entire world because of its threat to humanity as a whole.

When the cold war came to an end, the problem of disarmament rightly became a matter of great importance for the international community as an inevitable result. It has become essential to put an end to the nuclear nightmare by disarming all weapons of mass destruction. As a result of the efforts of several States, agreement has been reached to reduce the accumulation of nuclear weapons and their proliferation. Unfortunately, so far those States have not succeeded in reducing them sufficiently.

Our delegation believes that negotiations to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, should be given top priority by the international community. Moreover, we should continue our efforts to establish a reliable verification regime in order to confront the increasing dangers of biological weapons. The United Nations should continue its efforts to establish criteria and agreements related to such weapons.

It is indeed regrettable that today the world is facing a different type of problem, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The international community has realized the danger of the illicit circulation of such weapons and the role they play in destabilizing so many States. Indeed, they have come to be considered a source of many terrorist actions in regions of the world where chaos and disturbances reign, with all their adverse effects on the economic and social development programmes of the countries concerned. That is why the State of Bahrain calls for the establishment of rules and regulations for the circulation of small arms. We fully support all international efforts to curb the illicit flow of such weapons within the framework of preparations for the international conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons to be held no later than 2001, bearing in mind what unanimity can lead to. The report of the Group of Governmental

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Experts on Small Arms contained several ideas and recommendations that will certainly contribute to the successful preparation for the conference.

My country fully supports the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, but we express our regret that a consensus has not been reached at the Disarmament Commission concerning the objectives and agenda for such a session. We look forward to the convening of a fourth special session as soon as possible. We believe that such a session will be the appropriate framework for disarmament efforts as we approach the third millennium. Moreover, it will provide a valuable impetus towards further limitations of nuclear weapons and towards establishing confidence-building measures and reviewing the present situation with a view to eliminating weapons of mass destruction and achieving disarmament and development.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important measure related to nuclear disarmament. It is also an important confidence-building measure at the regional level, and a step that will contribute to general and complete disarmament and help to protect the countries in such regions from the use or threat of use of such weapons. That is why Bahrain has supported all the initiatives taken in this direction, particularly the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions. We firmly believe that it is essential to safeguard stability and security in the region and to protect its countries from such destructive weapons, thus allowing them to finance their development projects and raise the standard of living of their peoples.

Israel is the only country in the region not to have acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Moreover, Israel continues to refuse to abide by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) resolutions calling for the submission of its nuclear establishments to the safeguards regime, a very important step towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free of other weapons of mass destruction, which is essential for the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace in the region.

International cooperation to curb armaments, be they conventional weapons or nuclear weapons, remain one of the main objectives of the United Nations and the international community as we approach the end of this century. Our delegation believes that with a spirit of understanding prevailing in the world we could build a humanitarian and civilized society that will live in peace, prosperity and security for generations to come.

Mr. Palihakkara (Sri Lanka): It is my delegation's pleasant duty to congratulate you, Sir, and the Bureau on your election. We are confident of a productive session under your able leadership.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General and the Department for Disarmament Affairs for their initiative and broad-based work programme in consonance with the central role of the United Nations in addressing the disarmament issues, both old and new, of a globalizing world.

The Committee begins this year's work facing a host of millennium issues relevant to peace and security. These issues promise serious challenges as well as opportunities in the field of disarmament. However, any assessment of the international scene at this juncture cannot but be cognizant of some disappointing and even disturbing developments and trends affecting the current security and disarmament regime. As we transit into the next century, the optimism evident at the onset of this decade about greater security through more disarmament and more treaties seems to have given way to persistent concerns about the viability of the rule-based security regime, on the one hand, and concerns about the ascendancy of the force-based security regime on the other. Military expenditure has been on the rise. The use of force and weapons of all types has proliferated in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Conflicts have also grown in number and intensity. While negotiations appear stalled on the bilateral and multilateral planes, existing treaty regimes are being undermined by State action or inaction and by new weapons developments.

Doctrines have also continued to evolve, upholding the further utility of nuclear weapons, despite the fact that the cold war rationale for nuclear arsenals has ceased to exist. This is an adverse drift that can be reversed only by activating a multilateral process to address nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues which will pave the way for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. This is a goal the international community has unreservedly endorsed in various international treaties and at various international conferences, but, incongruously, we are either unwilling or unable to start doing what we had agreed we should do.

The Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating body on the subject, remains unable to

commence deliberations, let alone negotiations, on priority disarmament issues. The core issues of nuclear disarmament seem to be continually trapped in a seamless circle of posturing about the negotiating province.

As the international community and the United Nations prepare for the Millennium Assembly, a meaningful agenda for deliberations and negotiations on disarmament and security would be indispensable if the international community were to envision a regime of peace and security based on the force of rule rather than the rule of force in the next century. A multilateral disarmament agenda is an integral part of this regime. We hope that the set of resolutions and decisions this Committee is to produce will provide inputs for the formulation of this agenda in a constructive manner.

There are already disturbing signs that the new century will bring forth further challenges. My delegation has in the past highlighted the growing menace of the illicit arms trade as one of the emerging threats faced by the international community. We are pleased to note the convergence of views on this problem. Many of the intra-State conflicts and terrorist campaigns are driven incessantly by the seemingly unlimited supplies of illicit arms available to a range of armed groups. These groups continue to indulge in violence and have no compulsion to accept democratic means of conflict resolution so long as illicit procurements are easily available. Over time, these illicit activities generate their own momentum and networking arrangements. They have now assumed transnational dimensions of a disturbing nature. Very often at the receiving end of these illicit trading activities are militarily insignificant developing countries which do not have the capacity or outreach to counter this transnational crime network.

The nexus between the illicit arms trade and international criminal organizations clearly points to the need to address this problem as a matter requiring specific international cooperative measures. This can no longer be treated as a law-and-order problem relegated to the limited capabilities and authority of national law enforcement bodies. The forces and technologies that drive the globalization processes may be unwittingly supporting the activities of criminal groups which indulge in this activity.

We consider the ongoing activities relating to small arms undertaken by the Department for Disarmament Affairs to be timely, and would encourage the Department to accord priority to the illicit arms aspect. We urge the Department to develop its expertise and database on the lines of international cooperation activities being carried out by the United Nations in Vienna in regard to radioactive material and drug trafficking.

We also support the ongoing negotiations in Vienna on a protocol against the illicit production of and trafficking in firearms and explosives. We commend the adoption by the member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) of the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking In Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. This is indeed a trail-blazer in the field of international cooperation against this emerging threat.

Sri Lanka is pleased to note the groundswell of support garnered by the initiative to convene an international conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We expect the conference to adopt a specific action programme for international cooperation on a broad range of measures to address and combat the phenomenon of illicit arms. We share the view that the outcome of the conference should evolve through the preparatory process in order to benefit from the widest possible range of views on this complex global problem. We believe that the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms has provided useful inputs to the work of the conference. These inputs, together with the views received from Member States, should be brought into the preparatory process to ensure a representative agenda and scope for the conference.

Turning now to another item on the agenda, my delegation shares the concerns of a number of delegations regarding the possibility of new weapons developments undermining the peaceful uses of outer space. The objective of the prevention of an arms race in outer space has enjoyed broad-based support in the Conference on Disarmament. Outer space has been an environment vital to the preservation of stability and security on earth. Any developments that could lead to the weaponization of outer space would certainly undermine the security regime on earth and the peaceful uses of space. Space capability has not remained static. If we do not foreclose opportunities for the weaponization of space now, the international community may have to grapple with outer space non-proliferation measures later. That would be costly and unnecessary. Any arms race in outer space would be even more destabilizing than the terrestrial arms race.

The "culture of prevention" referred to by the Under-Secretary-General in his opening remarks has equal relevance to the danger of the weaponization of outer

space. The overwhelming majority of member States here in the General Assembly as well as in the Conference on Disarmament have therefore called for multilateral work, perhaps exploratory at the beginning, to address this complex issue. Given the increasing number of space-capable nations, it is natural that this question needs multilateral treatment. Sri Lanka, together with the delegation of Egypt, will propose a draft resolution on this subject. We intend to mould the draft resolution in such a manner as to facilitate some meaningful work in a subsidiary body of the Conference on Disarmament next year. We hope the draft resolution will receive the broadest possible support, as last year's similar draft resolution did.

The concept and principles underlying the peace zone proposals have outlived many far-reaching developments on the international political and security scene during the cold war and its aftermath. Although the context in which the Indian Ocean peace zone proposal was made has changed, the basic goals of the initiative — promoting international cooperation for ensuring peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean area — remains a widely shared objective. Consultations to be undertaken by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee are, therefore, designed to ascertain the best modalities to achieve the objective in the context of the still evolving world of rapid globalization.

At a recent meeting the Ad Hoc Committee accordingly recommended that the Chairman should continue to ascertain the views of the member States concerned. The draft resolution on this subject to be submitted by the Non-Aligned Group will therefore be procedural in nature, focusing on this consultative process.

Before concluding, we would like to refer to disarmament activities in our own region. We wish to thank the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Regional Centre in Kathmandu and the host Government, Nepal, for their initiatives in providing a forum for the exchange of views on security and disarmament matters relevant to our region and beyond. We hope that the Secretariat and the host Government, together with interested countries, will initiate a process of consultation to ascertain ways and means of devolving the Centre's operations to its base. We would like the draft resolution on this subject to take account of this necessity and include provisions to facilitate the valuable work of the Centre.

Mr. Tatad (Philippines): Allow me to begin by saying how glad we are to find ourselves in your very capable and experienced hands, Mr. Chairman. Allow me also to express our appreciation to last year's Chairman, Ambassador André Mernier, for seeing us through another interesting session of the Committee. I should also like to thank you, Sir, and Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala, for your remarks and reflections on where we are today and on the directions we should take for tomorrow.

We have been working for disarmament for over 50 years. Prior to this all efforts at disarmament, though no less dramatic or historic, had proved to be dismal failures. As for us children of the United Nations Charter and offspring of the nuclear age, our own disarmament record is somewhat mixed. Particularly with respect to nuclear weapons, this record is replete with compromises, always stopping short of our ultimate objectives. Always we have tried to put a positive spin on these compromises by referring to them as small steps towards the eventual total elimination of nuclear weapons.

As of last week, the sorry situation turned sorrier still. The rejection by the United States Senate of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a major setback even to the existing regime of compromise agreements. Far from being at a crossroads, as many have said, we might now be moving away from the road of nuclear disarmament.

Having listened to the debates in the United States Senate, I find that one thing is clear: after all is said and done, the United States is determined to keep not only a viable nuclear option but above all a clear and overwhelming nuclear advantage. Even those who fought nobly and valiantly for ratification conceded this point. This, in our view, is not the best way to pursue disarmament, much less perform an active leadership role in the process.

Most political and security analysts are agreed that five of the more critical flashpoints in the world today are in Asia. Four of these are in my region of East Asia — the South China Sea, Taiwan, the Korean peninsula, Indonesia and East Timor — and one is in South Asia, and four of them involve countries with nuclear weapons.

Deeply concerned about the proliferation of nuclear weapons in our region, the Philippines reiterates its support for the Non-Aligned Movement's call for an international conference, at the earliest possible date, with the objective of arriving at an agreement on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, to prohibit their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use, and to provide for their destruction.

Despite its recent setback, the CTBT remains one of the cornerstones of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. It is a compromise agreement and is far from being entirely satisfactory. But it holds the promise of providing a legal regime and a viable investment towards nuclear disarmament. For that reason, we remain firmly committed to the CTBT and join all others who have called for its universality. We are encouraged by the fact that, despite the rejection on Capitol Hill, the President of the United States has vowed to continue to fight for its ratification.

Last week's defeat, though a major one, does not and should not represent the end or a weakening of our resolve to fight for disarmament. On the contrary, it should challenge us to move on with greater conviction and resolve, remembering that the cause of nuclear disarmament has suffered setbacks before. At this point the START process is at a standstill, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review was inconclusive, problems remain in relation to the protocols of the nuclear-weapon-free zone Treaties and tensions remain high in South Asia.

Even now we have the opportunity to move on. When we meet next year to review once again the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, we must take all measures to realize article VI, we must work for the universality of the NPT and we must uphold the 1995 Review Conference agreements. The preparatory work for the forthcoming review was inconclusive, to say the least. But that should not stop us from doing more. In 1968 we wanted nuclear disarmament, but we got the NPT instead. In 1995 we compromised again and extended the NPT indefinitely, but somehow left article VI in a time warp. We are encouraged by the determination shown by many delegations to make the 2000 review a truly meaningful one. We welcome the proposal to adopt a new set of principles and objectives based on our work in 1995.

The Philippines wants the Conference on Disarmament to discuss nuclear weapons as soon as next year. Every other disarmament forum has nuclear weapons on its agenda, yet the Conference on Disarmament chooses to ignore nuclear disarmament. Even discussions on the fissile material cut-off treaty, another small step towards nuclear disarmament, have bogged down. The Conference on Disarmament has not done anything substantive in three years. The Philippines continues to believe that the Conference on Disarmament can still make a serious contribution to disarmament in spite of the impasse this year. The Philippines remains committed to the Conference on Disarmament and joins others in calling for universality in its membership. We do not agree with those who think that the Conference on Disarmament should remain closed to countries which are willing to join and contribute to its work. We welcome the decision to accept new members this year and look forward to a Conference on Disarmament with universal membership.

The challenges and opportunities that face us require us to reflect on how best to approach nuclear disarmament. We must not give in to complacency or defeat. In this regard, the Philippines believes that the initiative of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden, South Africa and Mexico, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", is a timely one and worthy of our support. This initiative broadens the avenues and choices before us and includes countries from almost all the regional groups.

The meeting of the Disarmament Commission this year showed universal acknowledgement of the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The Philippines welcomes the adoption by the Disarmament Commission this year of the guidelines for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. The Philippines sees nuclear-weapon-free zones not only as instruments for nuclear non-proliferation, but also as important contributions to nuclear disarmament.

On 12 October 1999 the inaugural meeting of the Executive Committee for the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone was held, chaired by Thailand. This meeting marked an important and symbolic step towards the implementation of the Treaty. Much work remains to be done, though, in terms of the protocol to the Treaty. Negotiations are currently being undertaken to address the concerns of the nuclear-weapon States, and, hopefully, they will sign the Protocol in the near future.

We also welcome Mongolia's initiative to establish itself as a single-nation nuclear-weapon-free zone. The Philippines did that in 1987 by enshrining in its Constitution a provision declaring a policy of freedom from nuclear weapons in its territory.

While we have achieved much in the area of other weapons of mass destruction, universality is still to be realized when it comes to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. But parties to both Conventions continue to work to bring others into these disarmament regimes. There has also been progress in the work towards strengthening the Biological

Weapons Convention through the elaboration of verification and confidence-building measures.

Our concerns are not limited to weapons of mass destruction. The problems of the proliferation of small arms and the use of landmines continue to be high priorities for my country. For decades my country has had to deal with illegal armed groups dedicated to violence and terror. We have seen first hand the death and destruction that comes with the unrestricted availability of small arms and light weapons. Women and children are never spared in these conflicts and often are the primary victims. Many of these weapons come to the Philippines after being involved in other conflicts halfway round the world. They travel the globe, driven by profit, sowing destruction and death, and threatening our democratic way of life.

In my country sincere efforts to find peace in areas plagued by armed conflict continue to be threatened by the easy availability of small arms. Post-conflict situations do not automatically translate into a disarming of armed groups. In addition, terrorists, pirates, drug dealers and international criminal syndicates have also taken advantage of the large number of easily available small arms. These weapons must be destroyed where they are found. Their easy movement must be curtailed. National arsenals should only have the weapons they need for legitimate self-defence. I believe that this is not only a just and fair proposition, but is also eminently achievable. The international conference on small arms scheduled for 2001 will be the best opportunity. The Philippines believes we should consider a legal regime to achieve this end. Several nations, by themselves or in cooperation with the United Nations, have already collected and destroyed excess and illicit small arms. In this regard, we support and commend the leadership roles exercised by South Africa and Japan.

Landmines are insidious instruments of death. They lurk in the ground with no regard for the identity of their victims. They kill even after the conflict is over, the guns have been silenced and humanitarian concerns have become the priority of Governments, civil society and the global order. International cooperation and dialogue and the active role of non-governmental organizations have proven very effective in the area of anti-personnel landmines. This year the Ottawa Convention entered into force and the First Meeting of its States Parties was held successfully in Maputo. An inter-sessional programme has been established to ensure the effective implementation of the Treaty. Landmine clearance and victim rehabilitation should also remain a priority, and the Philippines supports the initiatives in the plenary on mine action.

The Philippines has signed and is in the process of ratifying the Ottawa landmine Convention. The Philippine Government is also preparing draft legislation to criminalize the possession, use, transfer, sale and production of anti-personnel landmines. That draft legislation will also penalize parties that trans-ship anti-personnel landmines through the Philippines. It will cover not only landmines, but also components that are clearly intended for landmines.

As I mentioned earlier, there are areas of significant tension in my region. It is in this context that we value the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. The Centre has provided a forum for creative discussions on peace and security. It has brought together policy makers, academe and think tanks to discuss current and pressing issues. We support the idea of eventually bringing the directorship of the Centre to Asia, but until then we believe the Director should remain in New York, where he is readily available to the many delegations represented in this great capital.

At this point everything, or nearly everything, has been said about the necessity and wisdom of putting an end to the regime of nuclear weapons. We cannot continue to pretend that we have learned nothing from it all. For too long we have spoken of nuclear disarmament as the first and last key to peace. We cannot hope to bring into the next century that same language of peace unless we have the will to live it. We must now have that will and resolve that where the twentieth century produced the first nuclear weapons and their victims, the next century should finally abolish the last one of them and the peril they have come to represent to the very future of mankind.

Mr. Calovski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and express our conviction that under your chairmanship the Committee will end its work successfully. In that you will have the full support of my delegation.

I would like to note with appreciation the introductory statement of Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, which I am sure will help our deliberations. I appreciate in particular his readiness to share with us his views on many topics before the Committee.

The views of my delegation coincide with those expressed by the representative of Finland, speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The First Committee this year will examine almost all aspects of disarmament and some aspects of the maintenance of international peace and security. It seems that the Committee is well prepared to give serious consideration to the issues before it, and I hope in a result-oriented manner, which should advance the United Nations agenda on peace, security and disarmament. In doing so we should bear in mind the content of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, which, as we all know, is different this year from previous ones; the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly; the report of the Disarmament Commission; the report of the Conference on Disarmament; and other reports prepared by the Secretariat.

We should also bear in mind that next year we are to have the first summit of the United Nations, the Millennium Summit, and the Millennium Assembly, which will consider the strengthening of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, and in that framework international peace and security and disarmament. As a matter of fact, the Committee's deliberations this year should be seen as part of the preparation for the Millennium Assembly and the Millennium Summit.

Our Organization has already left behind it the period of confrontation, the period of coexistence or détente, and has entered the period of cooperation, integration and globalization. Multilateralism is no longer an aim or an idea. It is a need, a practice that is functioning. This process of change is irreversible. Our Organization can benefit from it if it acts as a locomotive of that change, if it promotes policies that unite countries, not create differences between Member States.

The Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization, and many speakers in the General Assembly general debate have stressed that 1999 was not a good year for peace, security and disarmament. Of course, we all know that. It has been underlined by participants in this Committee's general debate. We have seen many conflicts, and none of them have really been solved, in spite of many efforts. Threats of new conflicts exist in many parts of the world. The concern expressed in the general debate, both here and in plenary, is real and calls for dedicated action by the international community.

The United Nations, of course, should play a central role in the necessary action, as should the competent regional organizations. Our Organization's potential is such that it cannot be ignored or marginalized. The present marginalization is just temporary. It is compensated for by the diligent work of the Security Council and the activities of the Secretary-General. It would be possible to have better results if we could leave behind us outdated concepts and positions and seek solutions only on the basis of the United Nations Charter. Prevention, integration and development will dominate the future efforts of the international community and the United Nations. Disarmament is an important part of this effort, not a goal of its own or a subject to be dealt with only by disarmament experts.

It was important and useful that the representative of Finland, speaking on behalf of the European Union, stressed the relevant issues that threaten the maintenance of international security, in particular those in the region of my country. We share the stated positions.

This year the Republic of Macedonia was once again affected by developments in the region that seriously threatened regional and international peace and security. The repercussions of the Kosovo conflict on my country and the entire region are huge. Once again our region was the centre of international instability. Enormous international efforts were made to stop the conflict, find a solution to it and start a period of stability, security and development of the Balkans and South-Eastern Europe. The actions and activities were widely publicized, and there is no need to repeat them. My Minister for Foreign Affairs talked at length in that regard in the General Assembly general debate.

What is important now is the future development of the region. From its stabilization, security, democratization and development all will benefit. The Republic of Macedonia has been assured that the political commitments and promises will be honoured. In all these numerous activities, what is essential is the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the implementation of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, adopted in Cologne, Germany, as well as the successful functioning of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR). The Stability Pact is the main vehicle for the reconstruction, stability, development and democracy of the region and for the integration of South-Eastern Europe into the Euro-Atlantic structures.

The process of disarmament this year did not show noticeable advance. The commitment to "less armament, better security" was somehow forgotten. Instead of a reduction in armaments, statistics are showing an increase not only in armaments, but also in their quality. When one

sees the accumulation of more armaments and the further technological advances in weaponry, it is only natural to be concerned. The easiest way to respond to instability is to have more and better armaments. But in the world of integration and globalization that is not a good international or national policy. Undertaking disarmament and various confidence-building measures is a much better policy. In that, collective defence security systems are the preferred road to be followed.

For non-nuclear States like mine, the production and stockpiling of, and trade in, conventional weapons are priority preoccupations. We adhere to the position that each country has a right to have enough weapons for its national defence. But many countries have more weapons than their national defence really needs. Of particular concern are offensive weapons and the illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We do not have a satisfactory regime to control the production and stockpiling of, and trade in, small arms and light weapons. We should start working to have one, since that will be the best way to control the present unsatisfactory situation.

Developments this year confirm once again that national measures are not enough, and that there is a need for an international instrument that will regulate the production and stockpiling of, and trade in, conventional weapons. That will be a good answer in particular to the pressing need to stop the illegal trafficking in conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons. We appreciate that Mr. Dhanapala reminded us of

> "a significant increase in international awareness of and concern over the tragic human toll from the excessive accumulation and illicit trafficking in such weapons, especially small arms and light weapons." (*A/C.1/54/PV.3*)

We therefore support the organization of an international conference in 2001, which, of course, should be well prepared.

The Republic of Macedonia is a party to the Ottawa landmine Convention. We appreciate Canada's leadership and efforts during the adoption of this instrument and the promotion of the Convention. We are pleased that the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, organized by the Government of Mozambique, took place in Maputo and that the Macedonian delegation participated in it. The implementation of that Convention is important for so many people. It is our political and humanitarian duty to see that the demining process continues more vigorously and more speedily. It is important that the Convention become a universal instrument, and it is our duty to promote efforts in that direction.

The Republic of Macedonia supports all efforts to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction. Their elimination will enhance the maintenance of international peace and security, and all States will benefit from it. We are in favour of the full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and we support the reinforcement of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We should not forget that the elimination of chemical and biological weapons is also an important part of the struggle against destructive forces such as terrorists, and that such weapons can be easily manipulated.

This year there was no progress on nuclear disarmament, in spite of numerous efforts, and concern about the nuclear arms race continues. For the Republic of Macedonia, as a non-nuclear State, the priority is the advancement of the non-proliferation regime. We still have some time ahead of us to make the 2000 NPT Review Conference a successful one. The responsibility for this lies in the first place with the position of nuclear States and those that meet the conditions to become nuclear States. It is not realistic, in our view, to ask nuclear States to abandon their nuclear armament at present. But it is reasonable to argue for a reduction in their nuclear arsenals, which everybody agrees are unreasonably huge, and also to argue that the nuclear option has no future and that it would be much better to abandon it. We believe in the assumption that nuclear weapons will not be used, and we believe that the goal of a world without nuclear weapons is attainable.

At the same time, we should be aware of the relationship between nuclear weapons and the maintenance of international peace and security. Sustainable economic development, a true basis for international peace and good international cooperation, should not be endangered by the nuclear-weapon option. The Republic of Macedonia has already welcomed the decision of Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan to abandon the nuclear-weapon option and to become non-nuclear States.

We note with satisfaction that most States have signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Nuclear armaments need no more modernization or improvement. Modernizing or improving them is contrary to the essence of the disarmament process, which it seems we all support. So we would hope that all nuclear States could sign and ratify these important first serious

steps of nuclear disarmament and that we will not witness nuclear tests in future. The Republic of Macedonia took part in the Vienna Conference held some days ago, which unanimously adopted a Final Declaration calling upon all States to, *inter alia*, sign and ratify the CTBT as soon as possible and to refrain from acts that will defeat its purpose.

We are pleased that the Conference on Disarmament reached agreement last year to start working on a fissile material cut-off treaty, but we regret that it was unable to make any progress. Every effort, therefore, should be made to proceed with this important work next year.

We support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at between the States of the region concerned. These zones are strengthening both regional security and the NPT regime. So we view positively the establishment of such zones in the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, the southern hemisphere and so on.

We share the stated dissatisfaction with the results of the Conference on Disarmament. In essence, in our view, the Conference has two tasks: to promote disarmament in all its aspects and to prepare legally binding instruments in the field of disarmament. The main reason for the present unsatisfactory situation is political reality. It is clear that nuclear States have no interest at present in negotiating with non-nuclear States. They have told us that many times. Non-nuclear States have not been able to convince nuclear States that the option to negotiate between two sides is a better idea than non-negotiation, and that it is a rational thing to do in favour of strengthening international peace and security. We do not see, realistically speaking, that this difference can be bridged at present. So the Conference on Disarmament could deliberate on nuclear disarmament, but only on aspects where nuclear and non-nuclear States agree.

Another weakness of the Conference on Disarmament is its membership. Although the Conference on Disarmament procedure allows non-member States to participate in its work, it is still a forum of only some Member States of the United Nations, and not of all Member States, or of all Member States that would like to be members. Because of this, the Conference on Disarmament is not of much interest to many Member States of the United Nations. In this regard, I echo the call which has just been made by Mr. Francisco Tatad, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate of the Republic of the Philippines, for universality of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. We are, however, pleased that five States have been admitted to membership, and I would like to take this opportunity to wish them successful participation in the Conference on Disarmament.

Another serious problem of the Conference on Disarmament is its method of working. It continues to work as it did during the cold war. It should democratize its work and abandon consensus. Negotiated legal instruments should be adopted by a qualified majority and procedural decisions by a simple majority. The Conference on Disarmament should abandon the practice of establishing too many committees and the nomination of so many rapporteurs. Each agenda item should be examined at meetings of the plenary. Expertise should be provided by the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, not by the member States. This year's work of the Conference on Disarmament showed that a serious review of all aspects of its work is necessary if we wish to keep it as a relevant body of the United Nations.

The Disarmament Commission continues its struggle to survive. It was useful that it reviewed some questions of the disarmament agenda this year, such as international guidelines for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and for implementing practical disarmament measures involving conventional weapons. The interest of many member States in the Commission's work, however, was not really encouraging. In our view, interest in its work will be much greater if it is organized, as we have stated before, as a resumed session of the First Committee.

The agenda of the First Committee continues to be an issue before the Committee. It has few agenda items on the maintenance of international peace and security and too many on disarmament. In the view of many Member States, the First Committee is essentially political, and it devotes itself primarily to problems of peace, security and disarmament — to quote the conclusions of the Committee that looked into the procedures and organization of the General Assembly — and not only to disarmament.

Another problem is the number of agenda items. Some of them are very outdated. Some of them need serious discussion, but not much time is left for that. Many things are repeated over and over again. In our view, the results of the Committee's work should influence the political and security situation and the disarmament process. Our efforts should be directed to that end. We would like to be optimistic, however, and hope that next year, during the

millennium session, the Committee will resolve these issues.

Concluding my statement, I should like to inform the Committee that my delegation, together with other interested delegations, will submit, under agenda item 84, "Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security", a draft resolution entitled "Maintenance of international security — stability and development of South-Eastern Europe". The draft resolution will have no financial implications, and the intention is that it be adopted by consensus, without a vote.

Mr. Al-Ahmed (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, and the other officers of the Committee on your election. I wish you success in your work. I am confident that thanks to your experience and skills you will conduct the work of the Committee in a professional manner which will lead to achieving the desired results. I would also like to assure you of my country's desire and readiness to cooperate with you in order to reach a successful conclusion.

International and regional efforts to achieve disarmament make us hopeful of increasing international awareness of the need to rid the world of all weapons, because they pose a fundamental threat to international peace and security. Saudi Arabia's commitment to the United Nations Charter and the principles of international legality, which are the cornerstones of its foreign policy, require it to pay special attention to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in all fields, especially those related to international peace and security and disarmament. Saudi Arabia believes that these issues are an indivisible whole without which the world cannot live in peace and stability.

Because of Saudi Arabia's position, which always calls for security for all, and its efforts aimed at eliminating weapons of mass destruction all over the world, the Kingdom has emphasized its refusal to enter the nuclear arms race and to produce and use nuclear weapons. It was one of the first countries to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). It also refrained from producing or acquiring nuclear weapons or allowing a third party to place nuclear weapons on its soil. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia actively participated in the 1995 Conference in New York on the future of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the three preparatory meetings for the Review Conference to be held in 2000. It also adopted a positive position on efforts to reach a total ban on nuclear-weapons tests. Moreover, it participated in the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The Kingdom also lauded the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), issued on 8 July 1996, which affirmed that all countries should be committed to pursue in good faith negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. It also actively participated in the intensive efforts of the technical committee set up by the Arab League to formulate a treaty to turn the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

All the above efforts and positions are true evidence of the good intentions of Saudi Arabia regarding the issues of disarmament and international security, in addition to creating a safe international environment, free from nuclear and other lethal weapons.

The success in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in certain parts of the world as a result of cooperation between the countries involved and their belief in peaceful coexistence is a positive step towards creating a world free of weapons of mass destruction. Regrettably, the Middle East is not free of nuclear weapons, because of Israel's refusal to establish such a zone. Israel still creates obstacles by linking nuclear weapons to the peace process and to the participation of all parties concerned. Israel still refuses to accede to calls from the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to desist from developing, producing and testing nuclear weapons. Israel also refuses to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or to subject its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards regime. Thus Israel remains the only country in the region to possess nuclear weapons and programmes and chemical weapons that are not subject to international inspection.

The Israeli position and justifications concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East clearly contradicts its declarations of peace. Real peace should be founded on trust and good intentions among the countries and peoples of the region and not on the possession of nuclear weapons, the threat of their use, and Israel's attempts to impose its hegemonic political will on neighbouring countries. Such a policy will also threaten international peace and security.

Proceeding from this premise, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls upon Israel, the only country in the region that did not accede to the NPT, to

take the necessary steps to do so immediately, in accordance with General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. All Israeli nuclear activities should be subjected to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency so that the Middle East can become a zone free from nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Despite our belief in enhancing the effectiveness of the NPT by strengthening the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency and making it universal, we believe that we should introduce controls and criteria that would enhance progress in the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1 (I) of 1946. Accordingly, we urge all States that have not yet acceded to the NPT to take the necessary steps to do so and to subject their nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards regime as a contribution to establishing international peace and security.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports transparency in armaments as one means of consolidating international peace and security. It also believes that for any mechanism for transparency to succeed it must follow definite and clear principles that are balanced, total, and non-discriminatory, which I believe will strengthen national, regional and international security for all countries in accordance with international law.

In this regard, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms represents a first attempt by the international community to deal with transparency at such a level. Despite the possible value of the Register as one international way of building trust, and as a certain first early warning mechanism, it has faced a number of problems, the most notable of which is that more than half the Member States of the United Nations have continuously declined to offer information to the Register. This fact should impel us to deal with the fears of these States effectively and in a manner that makes participation in the Register more universal.

In this respect, my country affirms the response of the members of the League of Arab States to the Secretary-General contained in his report (A/52/312) on the Register dated 28 August 1997. This confirms that an enlarged Register, in accordance with resolution 46/36 L, which established the Register, including information on advanced conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and on advanced technology with military applications, might be a more balanced, complete and less selective means, and might attract a larger number of permanent participants.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wishes to express its hopes and aspirations for the creation of an international community in which peace, stability and coexistence prevail for the prosperity of all mankind.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): First I should like to express to you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau our great pleasure at seeing you guiding the First Committee. We are convinced that your broad competence and wealth of experience will help us to conduct properly and successfully the work entrusted to the Committee. We would also like to thank Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for the constant efforts he has made in carrying out his tasks in this field.

This session occurs at the dawn of the twenty-first century. If we held history to the mirror we would see black and white pictures. There have been dramas and tragedies that struck generation after generation, with the inevitable result that people are looking for solutions that will do away with the legacy of these tragedies and free humanity from any future cataclysm that might threaten it.

People throughout the world, throughout its lengthy history, have seen destructive wars with catastrophic consequences. Wealth has been swallowed up by these wars and provided the opportunity — too good an opportunity, in fact — for some States to test the power and quality of their weapons, find a pretext to develop them and increase their stockpiles of them. To add to the apprehensions that people have faced in past wars and catastrophes, nuclear weapons have come into existence to eliminate what little hope was left and to confront the entire world with continuous nuclear terror, the terrible fear of seeing these arms used, destroying entire generations. We quickly saw evidence of this reality when this destructive weapon was used for the first time in history.

Then came the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which revived our hopes of seeing some possibility of controlling this danger. Nevertheless, these hopes evaporated once again when the Treaty was indefinitely extended in 1995, thereby keeping the gaps in it in place and making it possible for some countries not to adhere to it. That violated the universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, one of its most important principles. It also paved the way for the new nuclear arms race that followed the indefinite

extension of the Treaty, under an unstable and unfair international order.

Syria, other Arab States and most States throughout the world appealed to the five nuclear Powers during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference to act in such a way as to encourage all States, without exception, to adhere to this Treaty. That appeal went unheeded, thereby leading to the resumption of the nuclear arms race that we have all seen, an arms race that gives irrefutable proof of the drawbacks inherent in that Treaty. The Treaty did not ban all types of nuclear testing, nor did it put an end to the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. In a word, the Treaty does not prevent nuclear States from continuing to update their weaponry through simulations and tests that do not reach the critical level. The Treaty then is not universal and has opened the way for the new nuclear arms race.

Many nuclear-weapon-free zones have been created in various regions of the world. Nevertheless, in the Middle East, which is a key strategic area, only Israel has refused to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In addition, Israel has nuclear installations which it refuses to put under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) global safeguards regime. In that way, it benefits from the support of nuclear Powers that helped it acquire nuclear weapons. According to the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, a specialized publication published in the United States, Israel is ranked sixth, after the five nuclear-weapon States, in the possession of plutonium for military purposes, of which it has approximately 500 kilograms, not counting the nuclear missiles, which are well known to all. It is not acceptable for States to continue a nuclear policy using double standards: to see one State benefit from every type of support and protection and to have access to the most modern technology and most advanced weapons, including nuclear weapons, while other States are denied access even to the most simple technology which they need for peaceful purposes, especially for development.

The international community is required today more than ever to put pressure on Israel and urge it to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and make its installations subject to the IAEA's safeguards regime; to renounce its warlike policy of possessing nuclear armaments in that region of the world; and to end its occupation of Arab territories, which threatens peace and security not just in the region but throughout the world.

The priorities of the international community in disarmament were clearly put forth in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) in 1978, which clearly states that nuclear weapons should be given the highest priority on the international community's disarmament agenda. That was confirmed by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its advisory opinion, which stated that to threaten or use force by means of nuclear weapons was unlawful, because of the serious threat to international peace and security.

Furthermore, we look forward to the holding of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) in order to cope with disarmament issues, already an urgent matter in the light of the latest serious developments on the international scene, which require speedy resolution.

The General Assembly will consider during this session a draft resolution dealing with preparations for an international conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, to be held in 2001. In this regard, we insist that the conference be limited exclusively to trafficking in illegal small arms.

The reality we must face in going from one century to another is that people will not enter the new century without pain or suffering. People throughout history have borne their problems, tragedies, pains and hopes, and one of their major hopes is to eliminate nuclear weapons in all their forms, because they are the most lethal and destructive weapons in history.

With the dawn of the new century and the end of the current one, let us try to commit ourselves to respecting ideals common to all people throughout the world, foremost of which is the establishment of justice, equity and respect for human dignity. Let us not try to humiliate or persecute people and make them victims of suffering through experiments with weapons of mass destruction. Let us put an end to the problems, concerns, tragedies and pain borne by people throughout the centuries as we approach the new century. This can only be possible if there is sincere political will and a commitment to adhere strictly to international treaties and conventions that we have all signed. Moreover, abandoning double standards would enable us to achieve our noble objective of disarmament, first and foremost nuclear disarmament, in addition to other types of weapons of mass destruction, so as to achieve peace and security throughout the world.

Mr. Barkan (Israel): Please accept my delegation's congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee of the General Assembly. Please be assured that you enjoy our full support and

cooperation in the task ahead of us. At the same time, I would like to express our thanks to your predecessor for the efficient way in which he conducted our deliberations during the previous session.

The last decade in the Middle East has followed the Dickensian formula of being the best of times and the worst of times. It was the best of times due to the peace process that began between Israel and Egypt and was expanded to an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians through the Oslo process and to the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan. Moreover, new ties were established with other States in the region, ties which continue to expand. We also made some progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of the peace process, and Israel is willing to resume these negotiations vigorously, aware that they may lead us to assume calculated security risks as part of an agreement.

Furthermore, on 13 September Israel and the PLO restarted negotiations towards reaching a resolution of the permanent status issues. This followed the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, signed on 4 September, which is in the process of implementation. The way is now paved for the resumption of a vigorous peace process reflecting Israel's determination to reach peace, stability and security on a bilateral as well as on a regional level.

As we review the security of our region we can see, however, that the last decade was also the worst of times. The increasing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, along with the inability of the international security and arms control regimes to adequately meet the challenge of this proliferation in the Middle East, gives ample cause for alarm. Moreover, the last decade has seen the increase in the danger posed by terrorists, both to the peace process and to the internal stability of various countries. In addition, we may yet witness the rise of non-conventional terrorism as a threat in the not very distant future.

The last decade has not been a good one for arms control agreements. Nuclear testing, the discovery of weapons of mass destruction capabilities in Iraq after the Gulf War, North Korea's secret nuclear plan, as well as the missile tests conducted by Iran and North Korea, all raise serious questions as to the effectiveness of global arms control conventions.

Let us look at the case of Iraq. Iraq signed and ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), signed a full-scope safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and during the past eight years has been under a most intrusive arms control and disarmament regime. Yet all of those mechanisms did not prevent Iraq from maintaining its clandestine programme for developing chemical, nuclear and biological weapons of mass destruction. Iraq still remains a major threat to international peace and security. Indeed, Iraq directly threatened Israel with annihilation by chemical weapons and actually attacked Israel's civilian population with lethal missiles.

The present political process, which reflects a growing recognition of the futility of the use of force as a means to advance political goals, has not yet fundamentally and irreversibly changed the basic strategic setting, or the general state of threat in which Israel exists and operates. The willingness to renounce the threat or use of force as well as the obligation to settle conflicts by peaceful means is not yet shared by all our neighbours. War and violence are still considered, and indeed advocated, by some as legitimate instruments of policy. Limitations inherent in arms control regimes are seen by some as nothing but marginal obstacles to be ignored or, worse, as convenient loopholes to gain the ability to produce weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Israel is confronted with heavily armed States which profess various degrees of hostility towards it, while possessing conventional and non-conventional arsenals. Indeed, it is a sobering thought that, 50 years after the Holocaust, some of our neighbours contemplate the use of poison gas against us.

In this geostrategic setting Israel finds itself small in size, with no strategic depth. It is entirely dependent on outside sources of energy and is also poor in other natural resources, including water. The density of its population and industrial centres make Israel especially vulnerable to attack. In this context, massive quantities of bombs and missiles, capable of indiscriminate damage and injury to civilian populations, should be viewed on a par with weapons of mass destruction.

Evidence has shown us that international conventions alone cannot prevent arms proliferation, especially of non-conventional weapons. Does this mean that we should stop our efforts to maintain these conventions? On the one hand, the answer is "No, there really is no better alternative". On the other hand, we cannot fool ourselves as to their effectiveness. In addition to the technological and procedural improvements that can increase the effectiveness of these treaties, we must strive for a regional approach. Such a regional endeavour, incorporating where appropriate the mandates of international instruments, is the only one that can assure us of reaching stability and security on a regional, and eventually also on a global, level.

The experience of other areas in the world has shown that full confidence is successfully achieved only where States enter into legally binding regional arrangements, negotiated by the States in the region, incorporating mutually verifiable compliance. Verification by a third party, however efficient and well-meaning, will never obtain the same degree of assurance as can be obtained when it is carried out by experts of the State that would be threatened by violation.

Therefore, our approach to regional security in the Middle East consists of the following components.

The first is the primacy of the peace process and the eventual resolution which is to lead to a durable and comprehensive peace. All regional security and arms control issues should be dealt with in this context.

Secondly, the peace process is a regional one and must embrace every country in the region. Within this framework, confidence-building and security measures have to be developed. Only on such a basis can regional arms control arrangements be achieved. Confidence-building measures have a role to play here, and the regional ACRS talks were a step in this direction.

Thirdly, a step-by-step approach is required. Any attempt to advance items on the overall agenda which should only be addressed at a later stage in the process will be self-defeating.

Fourthly, ultimately it is the progress achieved in the transformation of the region into a more peaceful, stable and secure environment that will set the pace and scope of arms control measures negotiated and effectively implemented in the region.

Fifthly, it is imperative to keep the peace process free of terrorism and violence. Terrorism, conventional and potentially unconventional, is supported, financed, encouraged and practised by the radicals in our region. It has assumed many forms, which are designed to disrupt the daily life of the civilian population, to undermine its resolve and to damage the economy. Above all, terrorism aims at derailing the peace processes which the Government of Israel and others in the region and beyond are striving to advance.

Sixthly, all steps and measures to be adopted through the arms control, regional security and peace processes must be designed to increase the overall stability of the region. At no point should they diminish the security of any State, nor should they allow any party to abuse these processes in order to acquire military advantages over the others.

Seventhly, every State is entitled to an equally high level of overall security, defined as freedom from threats to its existence and well-being. Thus, structural vulnerabilities should be compensated for by offsetting capabilities. Requirements for self-defence and deterrence of aggression are the only legitimate needs that should be taken into consideration in the arms control and regional security process.

Eighthly, the process and the agreements that may be reached should consider not only the threats from and capabilities of individual States, and non-State entities, but also those emanating from coalitions, treaties, political and regional military alliances, and from accords between States of the region.

Israel has aspired to achieve peace and security for all the peoples of the Middle East, with a life free of threats from the use of force. In this context, we hope that the day will come when a regional security framework, encompassing all countries of the Middle East, as the region shall be defined, will provide a cooperative multilateral response to the security problems in the region. We believe that the process of peace, arms control and regional security should enhance the security of each and every one of the States taking part in it, thereby contributing to the stability and security of the region as a whole.

This is the right moment, therefore, to examine the Middle East issues on the Committee's agenda. First, Israel firmly believes in the eventual establishment of a mutually verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We would like to see such a zone free of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as ballistic weapons. We believe such a zone should be established by direct negotiations between States after they recognize each other and have established full peaceful relations between them. It cannot be established by those other than the parties themselves, nor can it be established in a situation where some of the States maintain that they are in a state of war with another and refuse in principle to maintain peaceful relations.

In this context, it should be reiterated that, unlike other regions in the world where a nuclear-weapon-free zone has been established, in the Middle East there is a continuing threat against the very existence of one State in

the region, Israel, and this bears directly upon the region's ability to establish such a zone. Such a zone, therefore, would have to be directly negotiated and mutually verifiable. Only then would it achieve, on a regional basis, the non-proliferation goals of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Secondly, agenda item 79, "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" is a blatant political manoeuvre. As we proceed to a sounder and more secure environment in our region, the raising once again of the biased draft resolution under it will be interpreted as a clear manifestation of the misguided way in which United Nations bodies approach Middle East security dilemmas. Moreover, in terms of substance, the draft resolution has no added value beyond other draft resolutions already under discussion in the First Committee. One might also wonder at the incongruity of singling out Israel negatively while calling upon Israel to join the consensus on the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The so-called "risk" draft resolution focuses entirely on one region, ignoring nuclear proliferation in others. It also neglects the fact that the real risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East emanates from countries that, despite being parties to the NPT, were, and presumably are, engaged in ongoing efforts to acquire nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.

The singling out of Israel clearly reveals the one-sided motivation of this draft resolution. No other draft resolution specifically calls on only one named State among the non-parties to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or to any other treaty.

In view of all that, Israel urges the international community to demonstrate its disapproval of this destructive diplomatic practice, and show its support for the peace process, by removing this item from the United Nations agenda.

Israel, of course, also takes part in the concerted efforts of the international community to curb the proliferation of conventional and non-conventional weapons and, where appropriate, endorses global agreements which could complement those established at the regional level. Indeed, Israel has been actively supporting and participating in efforts of the international community to prevent the proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, not least through export control mechanisms inspired by those of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime, of which Israel is an adherent.

Israel firmly supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and hopes that the conditions necessary for its entry into force will soon be attained. Israel was among the sponsors of the General Assembly resolution of 10 September 1996 adopting the Treaty. Israel attached its signature to the Treaty on 25 September 1996.

Since the establishment of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in November 1996 my country has invested great effort participating in the development of the elements of the CTBT verification regime. We expect its essential elements — the international monitoring system, the International Data Centre and the full capability to carry out on-site inspections free from abuse — to be completed and ready as soon as possible. It is our view that this is a prerequisite for entry into force, as required by the first paragraph of article IV of the Treaty.

In considering ratification of the CTBT, we should also consider two other elements: first, the realization of Israel's sovereign equality in the work of the Organization, and, secondly, the developments in our region, including the question of adherence to the CTBT by States in the Middle East.

Israel has signed the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), but has not yet ratified it. We note with concern that some important Arab countries have not even signed — let alone ratified — the CWC. Some have openly declared that they have no intention of doing so. That is certainly one of the factors that Israel will have to take into account when making a decision about ratification.

As for landmines, the State of Israel wholeheartedly supports the ultimate goal of the Ottawa Convention to reduce the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. However, Israel is engaged in ongoing defensive operations against terrorists who attack civilians and infiltrate our borders. Thus, we remain uniquely unable, at present, to stand behind the immediate enactment of a total ban on landmines — not while they remain necessary for ensuring the operational requirements and safety of our troops and civilians. Yet the amount is kept to the minimum necessary, and its use remains strictly within the constraints set by Protocol II of the CCW.

Furthermore, in 1994 Israel enacted a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines, which it renews on a revolving three-year basis. We joined the General Assembly call for a moratorium, and hope to contribute to

an agreement banning all transfers of landmines. Israel has, along those lines, ceased all production of such landmines.

Moreover, Israel is actively participating in the mine awareness project launched by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Angola. Israeli volunteers are heavily involved in the project, from direct, hands-on education of the population on mine-awareness, and enriching the larger educational system in this area, to establishing a database for landmine victims. In addition, Israel has contributed substantially to the financial needs of the project.

In a breakthrough that suggests the possibility of further progress, Israel has joined with its neighbour, Jordan, in demining, incorporating a myriad of resources. This bilateral cooperation was in fact the impetus for a broader joint effort. Israel has recently launched a quadrilateral project uniting Israel, Jordan, Canada and Norway in cooperative efforts to demine the Jordan Valley. Other countries have expressed their interest in joining the project.

An additional outgrowth of the project yielded Israel's establishing, with Jordan, a programme aimed at repairing the damage caused by landmines in the past, with an eye towards raising awareness, training medical personnel and, especially, rehabilitating victims and landmine survivors. In fact, this past April Israel held and hosted an international workshop on the rehabilitation of landmine victims.

Israel takes part in the discussions on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and is in the last phase of ratification of amended Protocol II, concerning mines, and Protocol IV, concerning laser weapons.

On the confidence-building measure of transparency in armaments, Israel supports the principle of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and compiles an annual report. However, we do not believe it is fruitful to widen the scope of the Register, and we feel effort should be devoted instead to encouraging States to report to the existing Register. We find it strange to hear the vocal call of some of our neighbour States for vastly increasing the scope of the Register, when they fail to submit reports even under the existing limited scope.

Israel and the Jewish people have recently celebrated the Jewish New Year of 5760 in prayers for peace and harmony on earth. Israel's new Government is willing to take courageous and bold steps to promote reconciliation between us and our Palestinian neighbours. Further, as stated, we are actively seeking to achieve peace with our neighbours, including Syria, even as this may lead to the assumption of calculated security risks.

However, that will not happen if it is not accompanied by freedom from threats of annihilation, terrorism and war. Only then will we live to see the fulfilment of the vision of the ancient prophets:

> "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (*Isaiah 2:4*)

It is in our hands to reach this goal. The window of opportunity is open. Let us not miss it.

Mr. Amehou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to convey to you, Sir, our warmest congratulations on your well-deserved election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Aware of your exceptional skills, my delegation is confident that under your chairmanship our work will have very encouraging results.

Our congratulations also go to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, who spares no effort in promoting international peace and security.

The agenda before us is interesting and varied, but also complex. My delegation assures you that we will tackle it in a spirit of openness and constructiveness.

Benin is by tradition a peace-loving country devoted to justice, and endeavours through its institutions and civil society to build a culture of peace and tolerance and oppose settling conflicts and differences by violence, giving priority to negotiations and dialogue. In this spirit, the Government of Benin has decided to participate in peacekeeping operations around the world and commits itself to continuing to do so.

Today, despite the efforts being made to bring about general and complete disarmament, the international community faces the danger of growing insecurity. For proof of this, it is enough simply to review the tensions and conflicts that are latent or obvious around the world. The tensions in a certain region last year caused a speeding up of the nuclear arms race, a race that the world is watching helplessly. In this regard the five nuclear Powers have a great responsibility to the international community when it

comes to bringing pressure to bear to bring about the denuclearization of our planet. Regional and international disarmament efforts should therefore be encouraged. They demonstrate a growing awareness in international public opinion of the threat to the planet.

The proliferation of conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons, provokes and increases political instability and undermines development. My continent, Africa, daily pays a heavy toll: massacres of populations, civil war, large-scale banditry and so forth. Armed groups enlist children by force, train them to use weapons and turn them into child soldiers whom they train to kill innocent people in cold blood.

One of the consequences of the proliferation of these weapons is the threat that they pose to the rule of law and democracy in our countries, which are still structurally weak. We must curb this trend, and the international community must take energetic measures to this effect.

That is why the Government of my country took a very active part in the work of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to introduce the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, signed at Abuja, Nigeria, on 31 October last year. My delegation appeals to all regions of the world to implement similar measures.

In the context of practical disarmament measures, it would be desirable for the international community to help the countries concerned with the collection and destruction of such weapons. The training of customs and security officers is also important, and there is a need for technical assistance. Only concerted international action will make it possible to curb the proliferation of small arms appreciably.

In this regard, my country welcomes the United Nations decision, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/77 E of 6 December 1998, to organize in Geneva in 2001 an international conference devoted to this subject. We fervently hope that the conference will be well attended at a high level by our delegations and that it will serve as a fresh start by the international community in relentlessly combating the proliferation of these weapons.

We therefore hail the diligent action taken by the Secretary-General in appointing a Director for the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, in response to the request made last year. My delegation attaches great importance to the regional centres in their role of promoting preventive diplomacy, which Benin regards as a very significant pillar in the international peace and security structure.

In the same vein, the entry into force on 1 March 1999 of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction is an important advance. It is, however, regrettable that combatants in several wars around the world continue to use these barbaric weapons and that civilians, particularly women and children, fall victim to them. Consequently, my delegation urgently appeals to all those countries that are still hesitating to sign and ratify the Convention to join those who have chosen no longer to expose our children and our peaceful populations to the dangers of mutilation — if they are not killed on the spot.

With respect to chemical and biological weapons, it is still disquieting to note that certain States continue to manufacture, stockpile and improve them clandestinely. These States are thus severely endangering international peace and security.

Measures needed to bring security to the world include: restricting the sale of military equipment to sensitive regions; limiting credit for the purchase of such equipment; adopting binding international measures to ensure that military expenditure does not exceed a low percentage of gross national product; cooperating to ban the exploitation of raw materials to finance armed conflicts; and including in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms ammunition and small arms.

The international peace and security picture gives no grounds for rejoicing, but as history has taught us that the human race has always been capable of making a life-saving leap at critical moments, we venture to hope that the new century and the new millennium will be spared the ravages of the wars that we have witnessed in the course of this waning century, thanks in part to the tireless efforts of all delegations represented here.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine let me express our congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that under your wise guidance, and with the active participation of all delegations, the Committee's work will be constructive and effective.

Since the very first days of its foundation the United Nations has always been an important consolidating factor in maintaining international peace and security. Taking into account the huge spectrum of problems facing the majority of countries in resolving disarmament issues around the world at present, the prominent role of the United Nations as an effective instrument in elaborating common views in this regard is increasing.

Ukraine, having become an independent State, has made its choice, giving up its nuclear arsenal — among the most powerful in the world. In taking an active part in the process of nuclear disarmament and the elimination of strategic arms, we proceed from the understanding that the national interests of our State would be met through our participation in all treaties in the sphere of strategic stability. Among those international legal instruments one can mention the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and the START I Treaty, which contributed to preventing humanity from experiencing a nuclear disaster.

In its foreign policy Ukraine consistently abides by its obligations under treaties in the field of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. The elimination to date of 64 per cent of the total number of strategic arms deployed on the territory of Ukraine testifies to that. That figure is far ahead of the one stipulated in the START Treaty for the second phase of reductions and limitations, which will be completed by the end of this year. These reductions alone will save the world from a nuclear potential that exceeds the nuclear arsenals of France and the United Kingdom combined.

We follow closely the developments in the sphere of the ABM Treaty. That Treaty stands today, as it has for more than 25 years, as an effective instrument for promoting peace and strengthening strategic stability in the world. Therefore, we call upon all States parties to refrain from any unilateral actions that are inconsistent with the provisions of the Treaty and can negatively affect its viability or effectiveness.

Our country, whose people have suffered the terrible consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, is fully aware of the real threat to mankind posed by nuclear weapons. We are deeply convinced that the enhancement of the efficiency of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its universalization are the best ways to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. The leading role in this process should be played by all nuclear States, which are encouraged to take practical steps towards nuclear disarmament. In their turn, the nuclear States could encourage the threshold countries to give up developing their nuclear programmes.

Ukraine received with concern the information on the negative results of the voting in the United States Senate on ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). That Treaty is one of the key elements of the architecture of world strategic stability. That is why Ukraine was one of the first States to sign it. At the same time, we believe that the special responsibility for its entry into force lies with the nuclear-weapon States. The CTBT is a significant part of the international legal basis on which to promote the process of real nuclear disarmament. We call upon all States, and above all the nuclear ones, to complete the ratification procedure as soon as possible.

The continuation by some States of nuclear missile development programmes has become a source of deep concern to the international community. These developments could create an extremely dangerous precedent once the non-nuclear choice is questioned and challenged by other States. Bearing that in mind, we must make every effort to prevent the possible enlargement of the nuclear club. The reaction of the international community to the actions taken by India and Pakistan should serve as a vivid example and a strongly discouraging message to States nurturing plans to create weapons of mass destruction and the means of their delivery.

One cannot disregard the fact that the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is getting more acute and becoming the subject of debates in international forums on arms control and disarmament. Ukraine shares the concern of the international community regarding a further increase in the illicit trafficking of these types of arms, and is prepared to participate in the elaboration of collective measures aimed at averting this crisis. We support the initiatives concerning the need to establish a regime of international control over light weapons and to commence negotiations on the elaboration of a convention on preventing and combating the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. In Ukraine's view, such an international legal document could become an effective element in the international arms control system.

Ukraine supports the proposal to hold an international conference on the illicit arms trade in 2001. Being aware of the danger of the uncontrolled trafficking in conventional weapons and the negative consequences of their accumulation in certain regions of the world, Ukraine strictly complies with the Security Council and General

Assembly resolutions regarding restrictions on international weapons transfers.

We are also very concerned at the alarming number of victims of the large-scale and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. We make every effort to promote their banning and elimination. The following facts testify to that: the signing by our State of the Ottawa Convention; the prolongation for the next four years of the moratorium on the export of all types of mines; and the ratification of Protocol II, with the amendments, to the 1980 United Nations Convention on the ban or restriction of the use of inhumane types of conventional weapons, banning the use of mines, booby traps and other devices.

Let me now dwell on the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Last year, under the chairmanship of Ukraine, the Conference made a decision to initiate negotiations on the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for military purposes — the cut-off treaty — and to establish in this connection a relevant special committee. Its mandate was approved by all members of the Conference on Disarmament. However, the special committee has not yet started its work. We urge the members of the Conference to make additional efforts in order to launch the committee's work.

We are also concerned at the absence of a reliable verification regime for compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and we fully support the appeal to complete the elaboration of the appropriate protocol to the BWC as soon as possible.

Last November the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons (CWC) entered into force for Ukraine. At present the main efforts of our State are directed to the implementation of its provisions. The National Authority of Ukraine on CWC implementation was established, and the programme for its implementation in 1999-2008 was adopted. Last August the training course for chemical industry personnel was conducted in Kiyev, with assistance provided by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Ukraine is an active participant in the process of establishing the European security system, the important element of which is arms control at the regional level. Proceeding from that, we make every effort to strengthen peace and stability in the Black Sea region. In pursuing that goal our country initiated the negotiations between all six Black Sea countries, with a view to further developing confidence- and security-building measures in the naval field in the Black Sea. We consider this negotiation process to be a significant contribution to the strengthening of military and political stability in the region.

In conclusion, let me assure you, Mr. Chairman, that Ukraine will remain strongly committed to the course of general and complete disarmament. The United Nations can further rely on our full cooperation and support in this field.

Mr. Donowaki (Japan): I feel very honoured and grateful for this opportunity to make a statement as the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, which has completed its task of assisting the Secretary-General in preparing his report (A/54/258) pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 52/38 J of 9 December 1997 and 53/77 E of 4 December 1998.

The Group was nominated in April last year by the Secretary-General in order to prepare a report, first, on the progress being made in implementing the recommendations contained in the 1997 report (A/52/298) of the Secretary-General, prepared with the assistance of the previous Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, and secondly, on further actions recommended to be taken. Then, since one of the recommendations of the 1997 report was acted upon in December last year and it was decided to convene an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects no later than 2001, a third mandate was added to the tasks of the Group, namely, to come up with recommendations on the objective, scope and so forth of the international conference. Therefore, the Group's report, now available as the Secretary-General's report on small arms, dated 19 August 1999, deals with these three subjects, respectively, in sections III, IV and V. I will try briefly to highlight each of the three, but before doing so I should like to make a few general remarks.

First, I should like to stress that the Group of Governmental Experts, which came to adopt by consensus its report on small arms, was indeed a group of truly competent governmental experts dedicated to do their best to fulfil the tasks mandated to them. They have worked hard for the last year and a half, sometimes even over weekends and having night sessions. Also, in spite of the increased membership, from 16 to 23, compared with the previous Panel, they managed to demonstrate collective wisdom and the spirit of cooperation and compromise, without which it would have been hard to achieve what they did. My appreciation also goes to the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Group's consultant for their

generous and efficient support in assisting the work of the Group.

On the Group's report itself, some members may have noticed that it reiterates at the outset that in the implementation of the recommendations contained therein the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, such as the right of self-defence or the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, should be fully observed. Also, the Group noted the complementarity of its mandate with the ongoing negotiations in Vienna on a protocol

> "to combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition." (*A/54/258, para. 9*)

Therefore, the Group avoided unnecessary overlaps, and the report itself states that the mandates of the Ad Hoc Committee negotiating the protocol and of this Group are both complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Now let me turn to the Group's first mandate, which was to prepare a report on the progress being made in implementing the recommendations of the 1997 report. The Group's findings are given in section III of the report, which is fairly lengthy, impressive and substantial.

As many members may recall, the Secretary-General's 1997 report on small arms contained 24 recommendations, nine dealing with the question of how to reduce the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons, particularly in post-conflict regions and where the proliferation of such weapons had to be dealt with urgently, and 15 dealing with the question of how to prevent such excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer from occurring again in the future.

It should also be recalled that these recommendations came as a result of the first ever attempt made in this field at the governmental level. We can say so because the Panel which prepared them consisted of governmental experts nominated by the Secretary-General on the basis of equitable geographical representation, and also because the Panel's report was subsequently endorsed by a General Assembly resolution in December 1997, with an overwhelming vote of 158 votes in favour to none against, with 6 abstentions.

It should be further noted that behind all this there no doubt existed a strong desire of the international community to seriously deal with the problems caused by the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons.

It is against this background that in the past few years there has been an enormous surge of initiatives related to small arms and light weapons taking place at all levels — internationally, regionally and nationally, as well as at the governmental and non-governmental levels. Some of them were initiatives stimulated by the 1997 report of the Secretary-General, while some others were parallel initiatives reinforcing the recommendations of the 1997 report.

The challenge the Group had to face in preparing section III of the report was how to make a systematic stocktaking of all such important and encouraging initiatives and efforts. Therefore, the Group decided to divide that section into two subsections, with one describing the whole range of efforts and activities being undertaken by the United Nations, by other international forums, by regional organizations and by Member States, and another describing the actual progress being made with respect to each of the 24 recommendations.

As a whole, the Group was satisfied that significant progress was being made in implementing most of the recommendations, thanks to a variety of important initiatives being undertaken at all levels over the past few years. At the same time, the Group noted that with respect to some recommendations there was a need to make more vigorous, sustained and coordinated efforts. Also the Group noted that some of the efforts made in some regions, or individually by some States, no doubt deserved a wider following, while taking into account the conditions specific to each region or each State concerned.

It is appropriate to mention here that the Group paid particular attention to the question of the so-called proportional and integrated approach to security and development, the promotion of which by the United Nations and donor nations was one of the key recommendations of the 1997 report. The Group found it necessary, while not negating the usefulness of this approach, to clarify what was meant by it. The Group tried to duly reflect its views on this question in paragraphs 59 to 61 of the report.

I should also like to refer to one other recommendation of the 1997 report, which urged two sets of guidelines to be developed in order, first, to assist negotiators of peace settlements in developing plans to disarm combatants that would include plans for the collection of weapons and their disposal, preferably by

destruction, and, secondly, to provide assistance to peacekeeping missions in implementing their mandates. On the basis of its experience from various United Nations missions since 1989, the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations produced, in July this year, a document entitled "Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in a Peacekeeping Environment". I am pleased to state that the Group found that this document in substance provided the two sets of guidelines recommended to be developed.

Let me move on to section IV of the Group's report, which contains a set of possible further actions recommended to be taken. As I have indicated already, the recommendations contained in the 1997 report were already fairly comprehensive and concrete ones. Therefore, it is true that there was some scepticism as to what could be expected from the follow-up Group, with an increased membership from 16 to 23 compared with the previous Panel. However, I was very much encouraged to see that the outcome turned out to be the contrary. In the Group's report we now have 27 new recommendations for further action. Besides, compared with the previous ones, these new recommendations are as a whole more detailed, more specific and more advanced. I commend the dedicated efforts made by all the governmental experts of the Group. That being the case, let me voice my optimism that the chances for a successful and meaningful international conference to be convened no later than 2001 are greater now than before.

As to the specific new recommendations, in view of the time constraints, let me arbitrarily pick up a few of them.

On the surplus of small arms and light weapons, some members may recall that the previous Panel's recommendations urged all States to exercise restraint with respect to the transfer of such weapons, to consider the possibility of destroying them, and to ensure the safeguarding of such weapons. The new recommendations in the Group's report now say that all States should exercise the utmost restraint in the transfers of such weapons to areas where there are ongoing conflicts, that in view of cases such as Albania in 1997 adequate safeguarding of such weapons should be ensured and that States in a position to do so should assist others in the collection, safeguarding and destruction of such weapons.

Perhaps the presentation I have just made was too abrupt to spell out the fine differences. What I wanted to convey was that a number of improvements and fine-tuning have been made to the earlier recommendations of the 1997 report.

On the domestic laws and regulations regarding small arms and light weapons, the new recommendations are far more detailed and specific. Not only the laws and regulations on the possession of such weapons, but the laws and regulations on the production, export, import, transit or re-transfer of such weapons are now addressed, with specific references, for example, to authenticated end-user certificates and brokering activities. Incidentally, the question of brokering activities, which was not mentioned in the previous recommendations, received specific attention. For example, the 1997 report recommended that a study on the feasibility of restricting the manufacture and trade of such weapons to manufacturers and traders authorized by States be initiated by the United Nations. This time the Group decided to recommend that this study be expanded to cover brokering activities.

In addition, there are some brand new recommendations. For example, in view of the exploitation of children in armed conflicts, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other relevant organizations are recommended to enhance their activities regarding the specific needs of such children in post-conflict situations.

Also new are the recommendations concerning the marking of small arms and light weapons as an integral part of the manufacturing process. States are recommended to ensure that such markings indicate the country of manufacture, the name of the manufacturer and a serial number. Besides, States are encouraged to explore the modalities for sharing the information on the markings they apply to such weapons. Furthermore, some measures on unmarked or inadequately marked weapons are also recommended. These are, I should say, very significant and precedent-setting recommendations by the Group of Governmental Experts.

In accordance with the third mandate of the Group, section V of the report contains recommendations on the international conference to be convened no later than 2001. The Group was requested by last year's General Assembly resolution to consider issues relating to the objective, scope, agenda, dates, venue and preparatory committee of this conference. Of course the Group was fully aware that these issues would be considered and decided upon by the General Assembly, and the preparatory committee that would be established by it, and that these recommendations

were only meant for their reference in considering these issues.

Since this section of the Group's report is fairly short, I do not think it necessary to go into much detail. I only wish to stress that the Group noted that much of the trade in small arms and light weapons consisted of legal transfers to meet the legitimate needs of States, and that such legal trade should be fully respected at the conference. At the same time, with respect to the scope of the conference, the Group recommended that the conference should consider not only all types of illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons, but also the illicit manufacture, acquisition, possession, use and storage of such weapons, because these are closely linked with illicit transfers. Also, since the conference is to address the question of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons "in all its aspects", aspects of the issue of legal transfers should also be considered in so far as they are directly related to the illicit trafficking in such weapons.

Furthermore, all relevant factors leading to the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons in the context of the illicit arms trade are recommended to be considered at the conference. In this connection, the Group's report also stated that, among others, the recommendations for further action contained in section IV of the Group's report, which I have talked about already, have to be taken into account at the conference.

Finally, the Group noted, not only in section V but throughout the report, the need for the United Nations, regional organizations and all States to cooperate with civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in combating the problems of small arms and light weapons. Such cooperation would be essential for the success of the international conference to be convened no later than 2001.

Before concluding, I do not wish to fail to commend the leading role the United Nations has been playing in raising the awareness of the international community of the serious nature of the problems of small arms and light weapons. The work carried out by the Group of Governmental Experts, together with the work of its predecessor Panel, no doubt are part of such efforts by the United Nations. It is my sincere hope that this new report of the Group will serve as a useful basis for the international community in successfully combating the problems of small arms and light weapons and also better preparing itself for the coming international conference to be convened no later than 2001.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Donowaki for his introduction of the report, which will be very useful for the Committee's work.

The next speaker was to have been the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). He will not now be making an oral presentation, but his statement will be circulated to delegations.

I call on the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Mr. Walter Hoffman.

Mr. Hoffman (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to tell the Committee about recent developments regarding the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and our work to implement it. So as not to keep the Committee from lunch, I shall slightly shorten my prepared remarks.

Three years ago, on 24 September 1996, the CTBT was opened for signature, crowning over 40 years of negotiations aimed at stopping all nuclear test explosions in all environments. The Treaty's adoption was a milestone in the history of efforts for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and showed a determination to put an end to over 50 years of nuclear-test explosions, during which time there were more than 2,000 nuclear tests.

To enter into force, the Treaty has to be ratified by 44 nuclear-capable States listed in it. So far 41 of them have signed the Treaty and 26 have deposited instruments of ratification. Now, as of 19 October 1999, counting the other 114 States that have signed the Treaty and the other 25 that have ratified it, we have an overall total of 155 signatures and 51 ratifications. I am greatly encouraged that the pace of ratification has quickened in the last few months, particularly by those whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty to enter into force.

Last week's news that the United States Senate had voted not to give its advice and consent for the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is deeply regrettable and a matter of concern to all of us. However, we have noted that President Clinton announced that the United States will maintain the moratorium on nuclear tests and continue to press for the Treaty's ratification. I assure the Committee that the Preparatory Commission will continue to carry out its task of building up the global verification regime, which will take several more years.

We hope that during this time the United States and other States will see their way to ratifying the CTBT.

The CTBT creates an international norm prohibiting all nuclear test explosions for military, civilian or any other purpose. Even before its entry into force, the CTBT and the global monitoring system are capable of contributing to such an international norm. But the existence of a norm, and the high political price of violating it, cannot replace a legally binding commitment by signature and ratification of the Treaty. If the Treaty is to fulfil its promise, set out in the preamble, of enhancing international peace and security, it is essential that as many States as possible sign and ratify it without delay. By doing so, they will be pledging their trust in the Treaty's verification regime to detect clandestine nuclear testing and thus to deter possible violations.

Three weeks ago ratifying, signatory and non-signatory States met in Vienna at the invitation of the Treaty's depositary, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to examine the extent to which the requirement for the entry into force of the Treaty had been met and to agree on measures consistent with international law to accelerate its ratification. The outcome of the Conference was the unanimous adoption of a Final Declaration that calls for the early signing and ratification of the CTBT by all States that have not yet done so. The Declaration also calls on the non-signatory nations to refrain from acts that could defeat the Treaty's object and purpose before it enters into force.

Speaking as the Secretary of that Conference, I am glad that the ratifiers decided to request the Secretary-General to invite all States to the Conference, regardless of whether or not they had ratified or signed the Treaty, and that provision was made in the agenda for delegates to hear statements by non-signatory States, one of which spoke. This was another welcome opportunity to reaffirm the importance of the CTBT, to stress its universality and indispensability and the urgent need for it to enter into force, and to send a strong and unequivocal message to the world. Many speakers echoed the opinion that delay in the Treaty's entry into force not only postpones much needed progress in arms control, but also increases the risk that nuclear testing could resume.

I was also glad, as Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission, to note the widespread recognition by delegates of the Commission's considerable achievements to date in establishing the global monitoring system to verify compliance with the Treaty. I, too, feel that we have come a long way in the short space of 31 months since the Provisional Technical Secretariat took up its work on 17 March 1997.

Currently 209 staff members, from 65 States signatories, are working in the Secretariat, and 88 per cent of the assessed contributions for the 1999 budget of $75 million has been paid, as has over 90 per cent of those for the 1998 budget of $58 million. Thanks to this strong support from our member States and the hard work of my staff, we have continued to make tangible progress in developing all four components of the CTBT global verification regime, which has to be operational when the Treaty enters into force. This verification regime, unprecedented in the history of arms control, consists of first, an international monitoring system; secondly, a consultation and clarification process; thirdly, on-site inspections; and, fourthly, confidence-building measures.

Let me first take the international monitoring system. This is the cost-effective global network of sensors capable of detecting, locating and identifying the signals generated by a nuclear explosion, using four complementary technologies: seismology, infrasound, hydroacoustic and radionuclide monitoring. The sensors are attached to 321 monitoring stations that we are establishing or upgrading in the 89 countries named in the Treaty. These monitoring stations will transmit in near real time a constant stream of data generated by the technologies to our International Data Centre (IDC) in Vienna, where the data and IDC products will be processed and made available to the States signatories for final analysis.

Currently we have completed about 55 per cent of the site surveys to select the most appropriate locations for the stations specified in the Treaty and to assess the equipment they need. About 45 per cent of the work to install the stations is either under way or has been completed. We are now installing devices to authenticate and ensure the accuracy of the data generated at the stations and transmitted to the International Data Centre. For 16 stations we have initiated the process of certifying that they meet the system's stringent specifications.

Our state of the art International Data Centre in the Vienna International Centre is the nerve centre of the monitoring system. Its progressive commissioning is based on the operational experience of a prototype international data centre in Arlington, Virginia. Some members may remember that this centre participated in the technical tests of the Group of Scientific Experts that was founded by the Conference on Disarmament in the early 1980s. This summer we received the second of four releases of

application software from Arlington for installation and testing at our Vienna Data Centre. The software will allow us to start providing initial services and distributing monitoring data and the Centre's products to States signatories for seven days a week by next January. In the meantime, automatic acquisition and processing of seismo-acoustic data is being conducted continuously 24 hours a day to assess the capability and robustness of the software, and reviewed event bulletins and reviewed atmospheric radioactivity reports are now being produced regularly. In addition, training for operators and managers of monitoring stations has continued this year, as have programmes to recruit trainees for analysts' review positions in our Data Centre.

The on-site aspect of the regime is unparalleled, and here we are breaking new ground. While these challenge inspections can only be mandated once the CTBT enters into force, we have been busy with preparatory activities. These have continued to focus on compiling an operational manual, specifying and obtaining equipment for testing and training purposes, and introducing training and exercise programmes to develop a cadre of potential inspectors. In December we will have our first tabletop exercise, a simulation of various phases of the on-site inspection process by role-playing by the main actors during a real on-site inspection.

The international cooperation activities that we instituted with a workshop in Vienna in November last year, followed by another regional one in Cairo this year, continue. Here I should like to thank the Egyptian Government for hosting the meeting and contributing to its success. The workshops not only highlight the fundamental importance of the CTBT in promoting global peace and security, but also provide a forum for pooling expertise in station operations and data analysis, as well as for sharing knowledge of other possible spin-offs and uses of the four verification technologies.

In addition, our database of relevant scientific meetings, accessible through the Internet, should help researchers, particularly in less technologically advanced countries, to strengthen contacts and to pursue international cooperation under the Treaty regime. Indeed, the effectiveness of such activities in encouraging signature and ratification of the Treaty, by demonstrating the benefits of the application of verification technologies for peaceful purposes, was recognized in the Final Declaration of this month's Conference that I spoke of earlier.

These wide-ranging achievements reflect the commitment of our member States to the Treaty and our work in implementing it. The amount of surveys conducted, equipment procured, stations installed, training provided, meetings convened and money spent are the result of the collective decision-making and consensus of member States to chart the course of getting the verification regime ready for the Treaty's entry into force. By entrusting us with the resources to carry out this task, the member States express their confidence that we can deliver the verification regime on time. The question is: when will entry into force come about? We hope that it will be sooner rather than later.

In the Secretariat, we are carrying out our mandate on the technical side, creating a stable and durable foundation to verify compliance with the Treaty. It is for the States signatories to follow through and take the necessary political steps in tandem with the technical tasks. That is to ensure that the CTBT enters into force and that all the components of the regime can be brought to bear to make the world a safer place for generations to come. Only then will the Treaty truly meet the high and justified expectations placed on it by the world three years ago and serve the purpose for which it was intended.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Kim Sam Jong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply with regard to the remarks made in the general debate by some representatives who raised the issue of our compliance with our safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

First, I wish to recall that the issue of our compliance with that agreement is clearly addressed in the Agreed Framework concluded in 1994 between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, which states:

> "When a significant portion of the LWR project is completed, but before delivery of key nuclear components, the DPRK will come into full compliance with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA".

It should be noted that the Agreed Framework was welcomed by the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency as well as member countries of the European Union. The Democratic People's Republic of

Korea has sincerely implemented its obligations under the Agreed Framework.

However, looking at the present reality with regard to the light-water reactors project, which is the other party's responsibility, we see that construction has only symbolically begun and has not yet been stepped up to full-scale work, though five years have passed since the conclusion of the Agreed Framework. Therefore, it becomes hard even to predict when a significant portion of the light-water reactors project will be completed.

In view of the present reality, nobody can deny the fact that the issue of our compliance with the safeguards agreement can only be solved when the Agreed Framework is smoothly implemented. Accordingly, if those concerned have a true interest in our compliance with the safeguards agreement, they should express due concern about the implementation of the Agreed Framework. It is unjustifiable that while the behaviour of a big country which is not implementing the agreed framework properly is neglected, our country is questioned simply because it is small. Above all, impartiality will only be helpful to the solution of the issue.

Finally, I want to tell the South Korean representative that, as we have clearly stated on many occasions in the past, South Korea has no right to talk about the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Al-Hariri (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to speak in exercise of the right of reply to respond to what is said in the circulated statement of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Mr. Bustani, about my country, Syria.

We notice a highly selective approach by Mr. Bustani for the second time in as many years in his statement. As the Director-General, he should be neutral and objective in dealing with the issue of the prohibition of chemical weapons and other tasks. He has no right to make value judgements and interfere in the affairs of States and overlook the sovereignty of States over their domestic issues. Mr. Bustani concludes that certain countries should not make decisions concerning their accession to certain Conventions outside the framework of the United Nations and other organizations.

In his statement Mr. Bustani furthermore is biased, as seen at page 8, in English, concerning the newly elected Israeli Administration. We all know that Israel has neither acceded to nor ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. He arrogates to himself the right to call on other countries to accede to and ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention as if he had a mandate from Israel to do so. These are untenable double standards. This approach is also untenable in dealing with the issue in question, and is unacceptable to any delegation.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Unfortunately, the Director-General of the OPCW is not now present.

The representative of Egypt has also asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I urge him to be brief, because this meeting should conclude as quickly as possible. At the same time, I hope that the points made will be relevant to the debate we have had this morning and will not become a duplication of the general debate.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): As we have reached the end of our meeting, I will be very brief.

I associate myself with the observations made by the Syrian representative on the statement of Mr. Bustani, the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The delegation of Egypt had the same observations to make as the Syrian delegation. We appeal to and expect Mr. Bustani to be neutral and objective in dealing with these issues.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.